

Valley County FSA Office
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Mike Hagfeldt, CED
Stephanie Meier, PT
Roberta Hopstad, PT
Sheri Daggett, PT
Darlene Otten, PT
Jodie Berg, PT
Britney Cornwell, PT
Sharon Baillargeon, FLM
Jaylein Nickels, FLO

Dates to Remember:

November 3 –COC ballots to be mailed to producers

November 10 – All bales and livestock must be removed for Critical Feed Use category A producers

November 26 – Signup Deadline for 2008 DCP 10-acre or less farms

November 30 – Pasture, Rangeland Forage Index Program Sales Closing date

December 1 – NAP application closing date for Honey

December 1 – COC ballots must be returned by close of business



Valley County FSA October 2008

Adjusted Gross Income Limitations

Contact Person: *Stephanie Meier*

New Adjusted Gross Income limitations will be in place for 2009 and future years. There are three limitations to consider, one that affects all commodity programs, one that affects DCP (Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program) only, and one that applies to Conservation Programs only. These certifications will be based on the average adjusted gross income in the three years preceding the most recent complete tax year (so, for the 2009 program year, the years in consideration will be 2005, 2006, and 2007). The table below summarizes these limits:

\$500,000 Average Adjusted Gross Non-farm Income	Exceed this – ineligible for any commodity, price support or disaster program benefits
\$750,000 Average Adjusted Gross Farm Income	Exceed this – ineligible for DCP Direct Payments
\$1,000,000 Average Adjusted Gross Non-farm Income	Exceed this – ineligible for Conservation programs, unless 66.66% or more of AGI is average adjusted gross farm income

Direct and indirect program participants will be required to certify to the new income limitations for the 2009 crop year on form CCC-926 or through an accountant's or attorney's certification. The Adjusted Gross Income Certification form is no longer a continuous certification and must now be filed at least once every 3 years.

The Valley County FSA Office will have very limited staff on duty during the weeks of Oct 27th – Oct 31st and Nov 3rd – Nov 6th. Employees will be attending trainings for the new farm programs.

REMEMBER!

REMEMBER TO NOTIFY THE VALLEY COUNTY FSA OFFICE AS SOON AS YOU HAVE HAD ANY CHANGES IN YOUR FARMING OPERATION, DIRECT DEPOSIT ACCOUNT, ADDRESS, LAND OWNERSHIP OR LEASES. EARLY NOTIFICATION WILL INSURE YOUR RECORDS WILL BE UPDATED WHEN PROGRAM BENEFITS ARE REQUESTED.

DCP Provisions Amended to Include 10 Acre or Less Farms

Contact Person: Darlene Otten

The 2008 Farm Bill has been amended to permit producers on a farm with the sum of the base acres of covered commodities on the farm of 10.0 acres or less to receive DCP payments. The amendment only affects the 2008 contract year.

Producers on farms with 10.0 base acres or less have until **November 26, 2008** to enroll a farm for the 2008 DCP. The extended DCP sign-up does not affect the sign-up deadline for farms with greater than 10.0 base acres.

Producers with 10.0 acres or less must ensure they have a completed CCC-509 (DCP contract) and FSA-578 (Report of Commodities) on file at the FSA office by November 26th to be eligible for benefits.

NAP Service Fees Increased

Contact Person: Roberta Hopstad

Service fees for the Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) have increased for the 2009-2012 crop year. An administrative service fee is required to purchase the coverage. The service fee has increased to:

- \$250 per crop per administrative county; or
- \$750 per producer per county;
- not to exceed \$1,875 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.
- Service fees may be waived for limited-resource producers.

The sales closing date for all Noninsurable (NAP) crops except value loss and honey is **March 15, 2009**.

NAP is only available on crops which Federal Crop Insurance is not available.



Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance Program (SURE)

Contact Person: Sheri Daggett

SURE is one of five new disaster assistance programs authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill.

SURE is available to eligible producers on farms in disaster counties, including contiguous counties that have incurred crop production losses and/or crop quality losses during the crop year.

SURE assistance is also available to eligible producers on farms in which the actual production on the farm is less than 50 percent of the normal production on the farm.

For SURE purposes, a **farm** is defined as all crop acreages in all counties in the nation.

To be eligible for SURE and the other programs in the "Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance" package authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, **producers must purchase at least catastrophic (CAT) level of crop insurance for all insurable crops and/or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for non-insurable crops by the sales closing dates.**

The sales closing date for the Pasture, Rangeland, Forage Index Program is November 30, 2008. Please check with the office or your crop insurance agent to ensure eligibility in the disaster programs. The sales closing date for NAP is March 15, 2009 for all crops except value loss and honey.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Contact Person: Darlene Otten

The goal of FOIA is to release allowable information to a requesting party, upon Agency receipt of a proper written request.

All requests must be in writing, addressed to the agency, describe all records being requested and must be signed.

Privacy Act(PA)

Contact Person: Darlene Otten

Under the Privacy Act, an individual may request to review records pertaining to him or herself. The individual may also request that a third party have access to his or her records. **All requests must be in writing, addressed to the agency, describe all records being released and be signed.** Also under the PA, USDA/FSA may publish notices pertaining to "routine uses" or data sharing of such records with entities whose need for the information is compatible with the purpose for which it was collected. For example, loss adjusters' request for information is honored if a crop claim has been filed. Loss adjusters working loss claims and related compliance activities shall be provided compliance requests.

County Offices must receive a written authorization *before* information can be released to crop insurance agents.

Producer provided information and inspection reports or other records derived from visual, on-site inspection or observation on the producer's or owner's land are prohibited from release. This is because USDA derives such information directly from the producer/owner provided information. Maps that contain FSA delineated fields and acreages are not releasable.

Maps with National Aerial Imagery Program (NAIP) are releasable as this imagery is derived from airspace above the operator/owner's land.

Annual Notice of Payment Eligibility to Producers

FSA program benefits may not be provided to any producer until the applicable payment eligibility determinations are made. A producer will remain ineligible until all required forms for the specific situation are provided.

New forms (CCC-902) and regulations are in the process of being implemented. All participants will be required to complete the new eligibility forms for the 2009 program year. These new forms and associated procedures are not yet available, please be patient as we work to implement the new farm bill. Previous rules on permitted entity designation will no longer apply for the 2009 and future years. All payments, including those made for the individual's pro-rata share in an entity, will now be attributed to a single payment limitation for the applicable individual, though they will be issued as usual to the payment-earning entity. In addition, payment entities with the exception of joint operations will be limited to a single payment limitation overall.

Payment Limitation/Eligibility determinations may be initiated by the FSA County Committee or requested by the producer. Statutory provisions require that entities earning program benefits provide FSA with the names, addresses, and tax ID numbers for the members of the entity.

All Payment Eligibility forms (CCC-902) submitted by a producer are subject to spot check through the End-of-Year Review process. Farming operations selected for an End-of-Year Review will be required to submit additional documents to verify their contributions of capital, land, equipment, labor, and management.

Individuals, joint operations, or entities which are determined to be "not actively engaged in farming," will be ineligible for Direct and Counter Cyclical (DCP) Payments, Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Payments, Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP's), Marketing Loan Gains and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments.

Agricultural Financial and Production Management Workshops to be Held

FSA, in conjunction with Montana State University (MSU) Extension Service will be conducting Financial and Production Management training beginning November 3, 2008.

Topics to be covered are: 1) goals and assessments; 2) family business issues; 3) production records; 4) intro. and advanced quicken; 5) beginning estate planning; 6) financial analysis; 7) advanced estate planning; 8) crop and livestock marketing; and 9) energy.

The training will be conducted via a video conferencing method called BREEZE. These trainings will be available to current and future FSA loan recipients as well as to the general public. Participants will be asked to pay a registration fee to cover the cost of the video conferencing. Contact the location of your choice for further information. Workshop locations are:

Location	Phone Contact
NTDA Office, Stone Child Campus	395-4095
Blaine Co. Extension Service	357-3200
Fort Belknap Extension Service	353-2205, ext. 484
Little Big Horn College, Contact - Fredrica Lefthand	638-3131
Great Falls USDA Service Center	727-7580 ext. 2
Blackfeet Community College, contact-Terry Tatsey	338-5441 ext 760
Ekalaka USDA Service Center	775-6359 ext. 2
Miles City USDA Service Center	232-7905 ext. 2
Choteau, MT USDA Service Center	466-5351 ext. 2
Lewistown USDA Service Center	538-3489 ext. 2
Dillon USDA Service Center	683-3830 ext. 2
Ronan USDA Service Center	676-2811 ext. 2
Fort Peck Community College, Contact -Tom Black Eagle	653-3900
Bozeman USDA Service Center	522-4000 ext. 2
Culbertson USDA Service Center	787-6262 ext. 2